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Educational Writings

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

Curriculum-making.—One of the most serious undertakings of modern education is that of constructing a curriculum for the elementary school. There has been much of the try-and-fit sort of procedure and the inevitable patchwork result. Constructive education must rest upon abiding principles and clearly conceived goals. Such a body of principles and conceptions of the ends of education cannot be derived without taking stock of the human elements that are the very base of existence. It was to take stock of these fundamental human elements in setting up a body of principles that might serve as a guide to scientific experimentation in curriculum-making that Miss Hartman undertook the study which culminated in her book.¹ The primary idea that dominated the study is expressed in the Preface as follows:

The theory of the book is an attempt to organize in terms of the best authenticated knowledge, after careful study of a wide range of authoritative sources, a working hypothesis for experimental procedure. Since a pedagogy of any scientific pretensions presupposes a basis of modern biology, psychology, and sociology, of which it is a derivative science, a background of the points of view in those sciences, which have significance for education, is given in support of the educational philosophy advocated [p. ix].

Part I gives a detailed account of the literature on the biological, psychological, and sociological bases of scientific education with emphasis upon the sociological background. Leading authorities are quoted freely, and careful analyses are made of the material in the author's supplementary discussions. Part II discusses the educative process under four large topics, namely, the function of education, the place of activity in education, the organization of subject-matter, and the function of the teacher. The emphasis in this discussion is upon the idea of activity, and free use is made of the literature on that topic. The materials presented are ably handled and supplemented by very practical discussions by the author. After each minor topic in the first two parts of the book is a list of the readings studied by the author in the preparation of the material. These lists comprise a very valuable bibliography that is qualified by the author's digest of the literature. Part III presents a comprehensive classified bibliography of sources for subject-matter. The large

¹ GERTRUDE HARTMAN, *The Child and His School*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1922. Pp. xii+248. \$3.00.

divisions of the classification are: community study, our national life, and the study of other nations.

The book is a successful attempt to present the worth-while materials from the fields of biology, psychology, and sociology. It renders a very distinct service to the general student of education by giving him a handbook of selected data upon which to construct his thinking about the important problems in elementary education. The book will be an invaluable help to superintendents and supervisors in selecting material for supplementary reading in the schools.

H. W. NUTT

Handbook of reading methods.—The attack upon the reading problem, which has been stimulated by the new scientific study of education, has resulted in a large body of experimental literature. The investigations which have been made have produced varied and, at times, conflicting conclusions. It is desirable, therefore, that from time to time the entire field should be summarized, in order that the results of the experimental studies may be translated into usable directions for the teacher of reading. This has been the purpose of the author of a recent handbook¹ of reading methods.

The major portion of the book is given to a discussion of detailed problems of teaching reading in each division of the elementary school, with special attention to the middle and upper grades. The greater emphasis is placed upon silent reading, although the importance of oral reading at certain stages is fully recognized. The author provides an abundance of illustrative material and draws freely upon the recent investigations bearing upon both the reading process and the materials of instruction. The commendable feature of this portion of the text is the direct and specific manner in which the author attacks detailed problems. It is clear that his chief concern is for the immediate needs of the classroom teacher.

A chapter of some sixty pages is devoted to a classification and description of reading tests. Only the more widely used tests are presented, each of which is followed by a brief evaluation. Numerous suggestions of a practical character are given relating to the use of the tests for the improvement of instruction.

The book gives one chapter to a review of the contributions of psychological and educational research in the field of reading. The treatment of this topic is rather too brief and uncritical to serve what apparently was one of the original purposes of the author. A number of important research contributions are omitted entirely.

As a general handbook on reading for the classroom teacher, the book has many merits. It is full of concrete material which is directly applicable to schoolroom procedure.

¹ CLARENCE R. STONE, *Silent and Oral Reading*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922. Pp. xviii+306. \$2.00.